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S E C R E T LAGOS 001494

SIPDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/21/2029

TAGS: PINR NI

SUBJECT: C-CN4-00499 AND C-CN4-00503: NIGER DELTA

INFORMATION REQUEST

REF: A. SECSTATE 149523

1B. SECSTATE 149524

Classified By: Consul General Brian Browne for reasons 1.4 (c).

¶11. (S/NF) The Mission thanks its colleagues in INR for their kind encouragement of continued reporting efforts on the Niger Delta. Per your request, we have an update on reftels.

¶12. (S/NF) Captain Ogunjumi, former Commanding Officer (CO) of the Nigerian Naval Station (NNS) in Warri, left his post in January 2004 and is now attending the Indian Naval War College. Captain J. A. Ajani has replaced him. In conversations with PolOff and EconOff, Ogunjumi did not name illegal oil bunkering cartels or shed light on actors involved in the theft. We believe cartels are run by international organized crime groups and senior Nigerian government officials and businessmen. However, their identities are unknown to us at this time. We do know that militants hired to facilitate the illegal bunkering were, in Ogunjumi's estimation, 90% Ijaw and a combination of Itsekiri, Urhobos, Yorubas, and Igbos. A credible source informed us on July 1, 2004 of a Lebanese-Nigerian bunkerer named FNU Daaboul who was deported in April at President Obasanjo's instruction. Our source tells us that Daaboul, a Lebanese Christian from Kano, but recently based in Apapa, Lagos, had been involved in the illicit activity since General Shagari's time. Allegedly, Daaboul was deported after failing to heed official warning to end his illegal bunkering activities. Only his son has been allowed to remain in Lagos. Daaboul now reportedly resides in Lebanon. His family originates from northern Lebanon.

¶13. (S/NF) In reference to the ships that were released, Ogunjumi told us that he received a "phone call from Abuja" ordering the release. He said that a common excuse was that they were inadvertently omitted from the day's registry of authorized legal bunkering ships from NNPC. However, he refuted this assertion by questioning why these ships would anchor 50 miles offshore during the day and creep nearer to shore at night if they were engaged in a legal activity. He would not say which individuals owned the ships, but did say the cargoes were owned by Nigerians. The two vessels he was forced to release were named "British Progress" and "Prosperity." The "British Progress" had a British crew, which he held for four days before superiors in Abuja told him to release the ship. A vessel named "African Pride" with 18 Russian, 2 Georgian, and 1 Romanian crew members was officially seized in October 2003 and was registered in Liberia. Ogunjumi told us the cargo was owned by a Nigerian. At the time of our meeting in December 2003, Ogunjumi had officially seized 8 ships, including the "African Pride." We do not know at this time specifics regarding the ownership and registry of vessels; nor who operates and owns barges. We cannot give answers to other questions raised in ref A at this time.

¶14. (S/NF) In response to ref B, we cannot give further information at this time. PolOffs visited the region in June 2004, but were unable to meet with the current Naval Commander, Ajani, or the Assistant Commissioner of Police in Warri. PolOff will visit the region again to meet with these two individuals, amongst others, and will seek to answers questions raised by INR.

BROWNE